

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are now pending. Claims 12-21 are amended and claims 23-25 are added herein.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representatives by Examiner Haran in the May 6, 2004 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Figs. 1-4 are objected to for failing to recite that these drawings depict prior art. Figs. 1-4 have been amended herein to include this legend. Therefore, the objection should be withdrawn.

The specification is objected to based on the blank spaces on page 1. The first paragraph of the application has been amended to identify the applications indicated in the Office Action. Therefore, this objection should also be withdrawn.

Claim 12 is objected to because of a misspelling. This misspelling has been corrected. Therefore, the claim objection should be withdrawn.

Claims 13 and 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claim 16 has been amended to delete the term "mating." In addition, claim 13 has been amended to delete the term "mating" and reference to a puzzle cut. Based on these amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

All of the claims refer to a seamless flexible electrostatographic imaging member belt fabrication method. As recited in claims 1 and 11, the belt formed from the flexible substrate support sheet has a seam. However, the coating applied thereto is seamless. Thus, although

the flexible substrate support does have a seam, the resulting imaging member belt is effectively seamless.

Upon reviewing the specification, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the word "seamless" is used in the claims, not to refer to a belt that has no seam in any layer thereof. Instead, the term "seamless" should be interpreted based on the specification to read on a belt containing at least one seamless coating layer on a seamed substrate support, such that the belt, in its entirety, acts as a seamless belt.

To further clarify this, claims 16 and 21 have been amended to recite that the belt produced prior to the coating is a seamed belt having substantially no increase in belt thickness at the seam. It is respectfully submitted that this amendment does not narrow the scope of these claims since the phrase "substantially seamless belt" clearly referred to a seamed belt having substantially no increase in belt thickness at the seam.

With regards to the rejection of claims 13 and 16, claim 16 has been amended to delete the term "mating" and claim 13 has been amended to delete the term "mating" and reference to a puzzle cut. It is respectfully submitted that these amendments clarify claims 13 and 16.

The claims clearly recite the invention. Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-14, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,688,355 to Yu (hereinafter "Yu") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,997,974 to Schlueter et al. (hereinafter "Schlueter '974"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Yu is directed to a method for making a seamed flexible belt in which a flexible sheet having all of the layers of the belt to be formed undergoes ablation with a masked excimer laser beam to remove a first segment of material from the first major exterior surface at the

first marginal end region to form at least one recess comprising at least one fresh substantially flat surface intersecting at least one adjacent wall at a right angle, and to remove a second segment of material from the second major exterior surface at the second marginal end to form at least one recess comprising at least one fresh substantially flat surface intersecting at least one adjacent wall at a right angle. The first marginal end region is then overlapped with the second marginal end region and fused to form a seamed belt. Col. 8, lines 1-22. Yu does not teach or suggest applying at least one coating on the seamed belt formed thereby. Instead, Yu teaches incorporating a charge transport layer and a charge generating layer in the flexible sheet that undergoes ablation. Col. 19, lines 54-63.

Schlueter '974 is directed to forming a belt by joining two ends of a flexible substrate, each end of the substrate having a plurality of mutually mating elements in a puzzle cut pattern. To form an effectively seamless belt, Schlueter '974 teaches applying an undercoating layer covering the substrate and the bonded seam. Col. 3, lines 40-64. The undercoating layer is applied in order to smooth the seamed surface for application of the charge generating layer and charge transfer layer. Col. 4, lines 23-26. Schlueter '974 provides no motivation to provide a coating layer on the device of Yu where the charge generating layer and charge transport layer are already incorporated into the belt.

Neither Yu nor Schlueter '974 provide any motivation to apply a coating layer on the device of Yu. Therefore, Yu cannot properly be combined with Schlueter '974 to achieve the present invention. Therefore, the rejection over these two references should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 13 and 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,549,193 to Schlueter et al. (hereinafter "Schlueter '193") in view of Yu and Schlueter '974. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Schlueter '193 is directed to an endless flexible seamed belt formed by joining two ends of a material, the belt having at least one overlapping, butting, interlocking joint. See the Abstract. Schlueter '193 does not teach or suggest the fabricating method of claim 16, which comprises bombarding a first and second portion of the substrate support sheet with emissions to produce the first and second desired features; overlapping the first and second desired features; and bonding the first desired features with the second desired features to produce a seamed belt having substantially no increase in belt thickness at the seam. In addition, Schlueter '193 does not teach or suggest thereafter applying at least one coating to the seamed belt, as also recited in claim 16. Similarly, Schlueter '193 does not teach or suggest the method of claim 11 on which claim 13 depends.

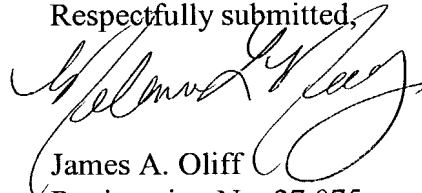
Although Yu teaches the use of a laser to form desired features, Yu does not teach or suggest applying at least one coating to the seamed belt. In addition, as discussed above, Schlueter '974 cannot be combined with Yu in order to achieve the invention since Schlueter '974 provides no motivation to apply at least one coating to a belt that already contains charge generating and transport layers.

For at least these reasons, Schlueter '193, Yu and Schlueter '974 cannot be combined in order to achieve the invention. Therefore, the rejection of claims 13 and 16-20 in view of these references should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-25 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Replacement Sheets
Amendment Transmittal

Date: May 12, 2004

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